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### Attitude of post-graduating agricultural students towards career opportunities

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#### Abstract

Agriculture offers diverse career opportunities in farming, agribusiness, research, extension, education, government services and the private sector. However, students' attitudes towards these opportunities play an important role in shaping their career aspirations, preparedness and decisions. The present study assessed the attitude of post-graduate agricultural students towards career opportunities and examined the relationship between selected profile characteristics and their attitude, along with the factors influencing their career decisions. An ex-post facto research design was adopted, and 173 respondents, representing approximately 30 percent of the post-graduate student population, were selected from the College of Agriculture, Parbhani, College of Agriculture, Latur and College of Agriculture, Badnapur through proportionate random sampling. Data were collected using a structured and pre-tested questionnaire administered through Google Forms and analysed using frequency, percentage. The findings revealed that 62.56 percent of the respondents had a medium level of attitude towards career opportunities, while 18.96 percent had a low level and 18.48 percent had a high level of attitude.

It is revealed that practical training ranked first, with 85.63 percent of respondents reporting its influence on career choice. Course curriculum ranked second, with 85.06 percent of respondents indicating that it prepared them for agricultural careers. Family expectations ranked third, with 79.31 percent reporting their influence on career choice, followed by faculty guidance, which ranked fourth with 75.29 percent. Peer influence ranked fifth, with 60.34 percent of respondents reporting its effect on career decisions.

**Keywords:** Agricultural students, career attitude, career opportunities, career choice, career guidance

#### Introduction

Agriculture is an important sector providing employment and livelihood opportunities through farming, agribusiness, research, extension, education, government services and allied activities. With the diversification of the agricultural sector, post-graduate agricultural students are exposed to a wide range of professional opportunities. Their perception and attitude towards these opportunities are important because they influence their willingness to explore, evaluate and pursue different career pathways.

Attitude is an important psychological component that influences how individuals perceive situations, evaluate alternatives and respond to opportunities. In the context of agricultural education, students' attitudes towards career opportunities may be shaped by their academic experiences, family background, achievement motivation, decision-making ability, career guidance and practical exposure.

Despite the availability of diverse agricultural career opportunities, students may differ considerably in their attitudes, preparedness and career decision-making. Understanding these differences is therefore important for agricultural universities, teachers, career counsellors and policymakers to design suitable interventions for improving students' career preparedness.

Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani,

provides postgraduate agricultural education through its constituent colleges at Parbhani, Latur and Badnapur. However, empirical assessment of the attitude of post-graduate agricultural students towards career opportunities and the factors associated with their attitudes is important for strengthening career guidance and employability.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the attitude of post-graduate agricultural students towards career opportunities and to identify the factors associated with their career orientation.

#### Objectives

- 1) To assess the attitude of post-graduating agricultural students towards career opportunities.
- 2) To identify the factors influencing the attitude of post-graduating agricultural students towards career opportunities.

#### Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth (VNMKV), Parbhani, covering the College of Agriculture, Parbhani, College of Agriculture, Latur and College of Agriculture, Badnapur. An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study, as the investigation examined existing characteristics and attitudes

without manipulating the study variables.

**Table 1:** List of the colleges for the data collection

| College                          | Total PG students<br>(2024-25 & 2025-26) | Sample selected<br>(30%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| College of Agriculture, Parbhani | 250                                      | 75                       |
| College of Agriculture, Latur    | 246                                      | 74                       |
| College of Agriculture, Badnapur | 80                                       | 24                       |
| Total                            | 576                                      | 173                      |

A proportionate random sampling technique was followed for selecting the respondents. Thirty percent of the post-graduate student population from the three constituent colleges was selected, resulting in a sample of 173 post-

graduate agricultural students. Data were collected using a structured and pre-tested questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The study considered selected socio-personal, socio-economic and psychological characteristics as independent variables, while attitude towards career opportunities was considered the dependent variable. The collected data were coded, tabulated and analysed using frequency, percentage, Pearson's coefficient of correlation and multiple regression analysis. Respondents were categorised into low, medium and high levels based on the respective score distributions.

## Results and Discussion

### Attitude towards career opportunities of post-graduating agricultural students

The distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards career opportunities is presented in Table 1.

**Table 2:** Distribution of post-graduate agricultural students according to their attitude towards career opportunities

| Sr.no. | Statements                                                                              | Frequency (Percentage) |            |             |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|
|        |                                                                                         | Agree                  | Undecided  | Disagree    |
| 1.     | I am a multitasker, and I can balance many tasks at a time.                             | 09 (05.17)             | 44 (25.28) | 121 (69.55) |
| 2.     | I am learning new skills, so I can get into a job easily.                               | 10 (05.74)             | 54 (31.03) | 110 (63.21) |
| 3.     | I can get to know what is hindering my path.                                            | 03 (01.72)             | 63 (36.20) | 107 (61.49) |
| 4.     | As of now, I need any job irrespective of my passion.                                   | 27 (15.51)             | 58 (33.33) | 89 (51.16)  |
| 5.     | I will reward myself when I get a job.                                                  | 06 (03.44)             | 43 (24.71) | 125 (71.83) |
| 6.     | Career planning is a huge task for me over other things.                                | 18 (10.34)             | 47 (27.01) | 109 (62.64) |
| 7.     | I will select Peace over salary.                                                        | 14 (08.04)             | 53 (30.45) | 107 (61.49) |
| 8.     | I will choose my career location which is near to my hometown.                          | 22 (12.64)             | 62 (35.63) | 104 (51.73) |
| 9.     | Reasons for not choosing my other preferences are clear to me.                          | 13 (07.47)             | 54 (31.03) | 109 (61.49) |
| 10.    | I am choosing my career in accordance with my family's financial status.                | 24 (13.79)             | 46 (26.43) | 104 (59.77) |
| 11.    | Irrespective of gender, I am ready to do any kind of jobs.                              | 14 (8.04)              | 51 (29.31) | 109 (62.64) |
| 12.    | Agriculture offers employment options in both public and private sector.                | 08 (04.59)             | 32 (18.39) | 134 (77.01) |
| 13.    | I am motivating myself everyday to get my desired job.                                  | 08 (04.59)             | 25 (14.36) | 141 (81.03) |
| 14.    | Agriculture jobs may involve both fieldwork and office work.                            | 148 (85.05)            | 24 (13.79) | 02 (01.16)  |
| 15.    | I am changing my career decisions frequently.                                           | 65 (37.35)             | 53 (30.45) | 56 (32.18)  |
| 16.    | There are very few international opportunities in agriculture compared to other fields. | 85 (48.85)             | 61 (35.05) | 28 (16.09)  |
| 17.    | My family is already financially stable, so I don't want to go for any job now.         | 43 (24.71)             | 47 (27.01) | 84 (48.27)  |
| 18.    | I feel that my education in agriculture will not help me to secure good job.            | 61 (35.05)             | 44 (25.28) | 69 (39.55)  |
| 19.    | I don't want to attend job fairs, because it will deviate me to other career options.   | 54 (31.03)             | 71 (40.80) | 49 (28.16)  |
| 20.    | I think switching to non-agricultural jobs offers better career opportunities.          | 52 (29.88)             | 66 (37.93) | 56 (32.18)  |
| 21.    | I have influence from politicians so, I will get job easily                             | 44 (25.28)             | 37 (21.26) | 93 (53.44)  |

**Table 3:** Overall conclusion from Table 1

| S. No. | Level of attitude | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1.     | Low               | 33        | 18.96      |
| 2.     | Medium            | 108       | 62.56      |
| 3.     | High              | 32        | 18.48      |
|        | Total             | 173       | 100.00     |

It is revealed that the majority of the respondents (62.56%) possessed a medium level of attitude towards career opportunities. Further, 18.96 percent had a low level and 18.48 percent had a high level of attitude. The

predominance of respondents in the medium category indicates that most post-graduate agricultural students possessed a moderately favourable orientation towards available career opportunities, while there remains scope for strengthening their career preparedness through appropriate educational and guidance interventions.

### Factors influencing career decisions of post-graduating agricultural students

The major factors reported by the respondents are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Factors influencing career decisions of post-graduate agricultural students Sl. No. Influencing factor Yes (%) No (%) Rank

|    |                                                        |       |       |     |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1. | Course curriculum prepares me for agricultural careers | 85.06 | 14.94 | II  |
| 2. | Practical training influences my career choice         | 85.63 | 14.37 | I   |
| 3. | Faculty guidance influences my career decisions        | 75.29 | 24.71 | IV  |
| 4. | Family expectations influence my career choice         | 79.31 | 20.69 | III |
| 5. | Peer influence affects my career decisions             | 60.34 | 39.66 | V   |

It is revealed from Table 4 that practical training ranked first, with 85.63 percent of respondents reporting its influence on career choice. Course curriculum ranked second, with 85.06 percent of respondents indicating that it prepared them for agricultural careers. Family expectations ranked third, with 79.31 percent reporting their influence on career choice, followed by faculty guidance, which ranked fourth with 75.29 percent. Peer influence ranked fifth, with 60.34 percent of respondents reporting its effect on career decisions.

The findings indicate that practical exposure and a relevant curriculum were the most prominent factors associated with students' career decisions. The role of practical and curricular experiences is consistent with Whorley *et al.* (2024) <sup>[3]</sup>, who reported that agricultural experiences, mentoring and curricular and co-curricular experiences played important roles in agricultural career decision-making.

The present findings are also in agreement with Purohit *et al.* (2021) <sup>[4]</sup>, who identified internal, external, interpersonal, institutional and socio-demographic factors as important determinants of graduate career choice.

Similarly, Joy and Pillai identified personal, social, employment and economic factors as major themes influencing students' career choice decisions. This supports the present finding that family expectations, academic curriculum, practical training and faculty guidance can contribute to students' career decisions.

### Conclusion

The present study revealed that the majority of post-graduate agricultural students possessed a medium level of attitude towards career opportunities. This indicates that although students generally demonstrated a moderately favourable orientation towards agricultural careers, there is scope for further strengthening their career preparedness.

Among the factors influencing career decisions, practical training ranked first, followed by course curriculum, family expectations, faculty guidance and peer influence. These findings emphasize the importance of practical exposure, relevant curriculum, mentoring, family support and career guidance in developing students' career preparedness.

Therefore, agricultural universities should strengthen experiential learning, career counselling, mentoring, industry exposure, skill development and awareness programmes to enable post-graduate agricultural students to make informed career decisions and explore the diverse opportunities available within and beyond the agricultural sector.

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